

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims and add new claims 20 and 21 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A tube of synthetic silica glass for producing a preform, said tube comprising a cylinder body of silica glass which has an inner bore and ~~[with-a]~~ an inner peripheral surface [layer] facing said inner bore produced without tool-contact in a ~~[the]~~ molten state, an outer cylinder wall, and an inner region extending between said inner bore and said outer cylinder wall, wherein ~~[characterized in that the]~~ a surface region having [layer (30) has] a thickness of 10 μm extending from the inner peripheral surface has ~~[and]~~ a mean OH content of not more than 5 wtppm and the inner peripheral surface has an average surface roughness R_a of not more than 0.1 μm ~~[therein]~~, and ~~[that]~~ the inner region extending from the inner bore ~~[(34) which starts on the surface layer (30)]~~ and ~~[terminates]~~ terminating 10 μm before the outer cylinder wall, said inner region having ~~[has]~~ a mean OH content of not more than 0.2 wtppm.

2. (currently amended) The silica glass tube according to claim 1, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the mean OH content in the surface region ~~[layer (30)]~~ is not more than 1 wtppm.

3. (currently amended) The silica glass tube according to claim 1 ~~[or-2]~~, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the mean OH content in the inner region ~~[(34)]~~ is not more than 0.1 wtppm.

4. (currently amended) The silica glass tube according to claim 1 [~~any one of the preceding claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the synthetic silica glass is doped with a dopant [~~in the form~~] selected from the group consisting of fluorine, GeO_2 , B_2O_3 , P_2O_5 , Al_2O_3 , and TiO_2 , or with a combination of two or more of said dopants of said group.

5. (currently amended) A method for producing a tube of synthetic silica glass in a vertical drawing method, said method comprising:

supplying [~~in that~~] a silica glass mass [~~is~~] continuously [~~supplied~~] to a heating zone and [~~softened~~] softening the silica glass mass therein, and

drawing a tube strand [~~is~~] continuously [~~drawn~~] off from [~~the~~] a softened region of said silica glass mass,

said tube strand having an inner bore therein, [~~and~~] a scavenging gas being [~~is~~] circulated through the inner bore of said tube strand, and

obtaining a silica glass tube [~~is obtained therefrom~~] by cutting said tube strand to length,

wherein [~~characterized in that a~~] the scavenging gas [~~(23) having~~] has a water content of less than 100 wtppb [~~is used~~], and wherein [~~that the~~] a front end of the tube strand [~~(19)~~] is closed by a flow obstacle [~~(26)~~] which is permeable to the scavenging gas [~~glass~~] and which reduces flow [~~the amount~~] of the scavenging gas [~~(23)~~] flowing therethrough.

6. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5, wherein [~~characterized in that~~] [~~a~~] the scavenging gas has [~~(23) is used having~~] a water content of less than 30 wtppb.

7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~or 6~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the flow obstacle [(26)] is formed by a plug which projects into the inner bore of the tube strand and which narrows [~~the~~] a cross-section of flow of the [~~freely flowing~~] scavenging gas [(23)].
8. (currently amended) The method according to claim 6 [~~or 7~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the flow obstacle is produced by a gas curtain acting on the front end of the tube strand.
9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~any one of the preceding method claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the silica glass mass is provided in the form of a hollow cylinder [(2)] which, starting with [~~its~~] a front end thereof, is continuously fed to the heating zone [(1)] and softened therein in portions, and the tube strand [(21)] is continuously drawn off from the softened region, the hollow cylinder [(2)] being elongated to at least 5 times its initial length.
10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 9, wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the hollow cylinder [(2)] is elongated to at least 20 times its initial length.

11. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~any one of the preceding method-claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the scavenging gas [(23)] contains a gaseous drying agent [~~, particularly a chlorine-containing gas~~].
12. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~any one of the preceding method-claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the scavenging gas [(23)] is subjected to a drying process before being introduced into the inner bore [(4)] of the tube strand.
13. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~any one of the preceding method-claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] the volume flow of the scavenging gas [(23)] through the inner bore [(4)] is not more than 80 l/min.
14. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 [~~any one of the preceding method-claims~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] an external scavenging gas [(24)] flows around the outer cladding of the tube strand [(21)] in the region of the heating zone [(1)], the external scavenging gas having a water content, the water content of the scavenging gas [(23)] being lower by at least [~~the~~] a factor of 10 than [~~that~~] the water content of the external scavenging gas [(24)].
15. (currently amended) The method according to claim 6 [~~any one of claims 6 to 13~~], wherein [~~characterized in that~~] an external scavenging gas [(24)] flows around the outer cladding of the tube strand [(21)] in the region of the heating zone [(1)], the same gas being

used as both the scavenging gas ~~[(23)-being-used]~~ and as the external scavenging gas ~~[(24)]~~.

16. (currently amended) The method according to claim 14 ~~[any one of claims 14 or 15]~~, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the external scavenging gas ~~[(24)]~~ flows around the outer cladding of the tube strand ~~[(21)]~~ at least for a duration of time such ~~[a long time]~~ that said strand is cooled down to a temperature below 900°C.

17. (currently amended) The method according to claim 5 ~~[any one of the preceding method-claims]~~, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the silica glass tube is subjected to an OH reduction treatment at a temperature of at least 900°C in a water-free atmosphere or in vacuum.

18. (currently amended) The method according to claim 17, wherein ~~[characterized in that]~~ the OH reduction treatment includes a treatment in a deuterium-containing atmosphere.

19. (currently amended) A method of forming a tubular glass member, said method comprising: [Use of the] forming a silica glass tube according to claim 1 ~~[any one of claims 1 to 4 or of the silica glass tube produced according to the method according to any one of claims 5 to 18]~~, and depositing ~~[as a substrate tube for internal deposition of]~~ SiO₂ layers ~~[in-an]~~ on the inner peripheral facing said inner bore using MCVD [method] with said silica glass tube being used as a substrate tube for said MCVD.

20. (new) The method according to claim 5, wherein the scavenging gas contains a gaseous drying agent comprising a chlorine-containing gas.

21. (new) A method of forming a tubular glass member, said method comprising: forming a silica glass tube according to the method of claim 5; and depositing SiO_2 layers on the silica glass tube in the inner bore using MCVD with said silica glass tube being used as a substrate tube for said MCVD.